

Oral Cancer Self-Exam

Look at and feel your:

Head and neck – look at your face and neck in a mirror. Normally the left and right sides of the face have the same shape and are symmetrical. Look for any lumps, bumps, or swellings that are only on one side of your face.

Face – examine the skin on your face for changes in color or size, sores, moles or growths.

Neck – press along the sides and front of the neck for tenderness or lumps.

Lips – pull your lower lip down and look for sores or color changes. Then, use your thumb and forefinger to feel the lips for lumps, bumps, or changes in texture. Repeat this on your upper lip.

Cheek – examine your inner cheek for red, white or dark patches. Put your index finger on the inside of your cheek and your thumb on the outside. Gently squeeze and roll both sides of your cheek between your fingers to check for any lumps or areas of tenderness.

Roof of the mouth – tilt your head back and open your mouth wide to look for any lumps and see if the color is different from the usual. Touch the roof of your mouth to feel for lumps.

Floor of the mouth and tongue – extend your tongue and look at the top surface for color and texture. Pull your tongue forward to look at both sides for any swellings or color changes. Examine the underside of the tongue by placing the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Look at the floor of your mouth and the underside of your tongue for color changes, and press your finger against the underside of your tongue to feel for any lumps or swellings.

If you find anything out of the ordinary – particularly anything that does not heal or go away in two weeks, or that has recently changed – discuss it with your oral health professional or primary health care provider.